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JOB PICTURE FOR 1983 COLLEGE GRADUATES NOT YET BRIGHTENED BY ECONOMIC REBOUND

MISSOULA--

The upturn in the economy has not improved employment prospects for 1983 college graduates-- or at least improvement is not evident at this stage-- according to data just released by the College Placement Council.

Don Hjelmseth, director of placement at the University of Montana, a participating institution in the national survey, says historically there is a time lag between the first upward movement of the economy and the impact on employment.

He says that when the data are in next fall on UM 1983 graduates, they will probably reflect quite accurately what is happening on campuses nationally.

The council's March 1983 salary survey found no consistent signs that employers were stepping up hiring for the rest of this academic year.

The council's latest figures indicate only half as many job offers this year as at the same point last year. The survey covers offers reported between Sept. 1, 1982, and March 4, 1983.

Hjelmseth stressed that these figures don't mean there are only half as many jobs. He said that in a competitive year employers often have to make numerous offers to fill one position because students can choose from a number of offers. In the present tight job market, however, students are accepting offers almost as soon as they receive them. As a result, employers are making significantly fewer offers.

(over)

Computer science graduates dominated the sciences category in number of offers, but their beginning average salary offer of \$23,172 was only up 1.2 percent from last year. This compares with a 9 percent increase reported at the same time last year.

The business disciplines in the report showed only moderate beginning salary increases from about 1 to 2.3 percent. Increases in the business categories a year ago averaged 8 to 9 percent. The highest average salary offer in this group this year, \$18,744, went to accounting majors.

Liberal arts students may be better prepared for the current conditions than their classmates with technical degrees who have seen the market soften only recently, according to the council. The survey found an average beginning salary offer of \$14,256 for students in the humanities.

Hjelmseth said the council's salary survey data are based on offers, not acceptances, made to college students in selected curricula. Data are submitted throughout the year by 185 placement offices at the 160 participating colleges and universities.

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